CHAPTER 3

The Printing of Missals and Breviaries as Ecclesiastical Authority in the Late-Medieval Baltic Region

A Battle between Printers or between Bishops?

Mattias Lundberg

A significant number of the books printed in or for the Baltic region before 1500 were liturgical volumes intended for use in a particular diocese. These were typically commissioned by a bishop or a consistorium to a local or itinerant printer. Such a print was an enterprise with few risks for a printer; if the diocese acquired and paid for the entire edition, the market and the quota of copies were guaranteed.¹ For a bishopric in Northern Europe the new innovation of print could be used to codify and enforce the particular usus of its Cathedral church, concerning feasts, texts and melodies that differed slightly from one diocese to another and which often stretched back for centuries. The usus of a Cathedral was expected to be imitated as closely as possible in the services of all parish churches throughout the diocese. The cost of a printed breviary, the rite for the Office to be learned by all priests in a diocese, have in some cases been estimated to have been around a fourth of the cost needed to produce a manuscript breviary.² Thus these books helped perpetuate the audible manifestation of which diocese a parish, city or collegiate church belonged to, with a greater degree of uniformity and at a lesser price than what had thither been possible.

The British Library Incunabula Short Title Catalogue and the Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke at The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin list thirteen missals, twelve breviaries and a number of psalters that could either through their

¹ In a few cases, it seems that the copies were sold by the printer or bookshops, but then often with admonishments and exhortations from the bishop or consistorium to buy the book in question. Mary Kay Duggan, ‘Reading Liturgical Books’, in Kristian Jensen (ed.), Incunabula and their Readers: Printing, Selling and Using Books in the Fifteenth Century (London: British Library, 2013), pp. 71–82, here p. 74.
titles, colophons, or elsewhere through discernable information in the printed material be linked to a diocese in the region surrounding the Baltic Sea before 1500. These were published between 1478 and 1500 and span the region from Bremen in the West to Warmia in the East and Turku in the North. If one considers the geography and timeline of these around thirty printed items, certain patterns become apparent. It is surprising that this vast and unique material has not been subject to more intensive research. In 2011 Natalia Nowakowska could assert that:

[to date, these episcopally commissioned incunabula have been the subject only of a handful of avowedly local studies, with the result that this class of early printed books has not yet been recognized, far less explored, as the European-wide ecclesiastical phenomenon that it is.]

The purpose of the present study is to examine closely the interplay between ecclesiastical authorities and individual printers in the Scandinavian region at the end of the fifteenth century.

1 The Print Genres of Missal and Breviary

Typically, a European diocese in the late fifteenth century would, if it could muster the funds, print a missal in folio (containing the sung and read texts for the mass of that diocese) and a breviary in quarto or octavo (containing the sung and read texts for the hours of the divine office for the diocese) together. These two books contained texts that were either read or chanted to memorized melodies and melodic accents. They therefore typically contain only a bare minimum of musical notation, but still enabled a priest to celebrate Mass and Office, possibly alongside a manuscript Gradual and Kyriale. This made Missals and Breviaries perfect printing products for dioceses and printers alike, something that doubtlessly accounts for the relatively large numbers of such editions. The more advanced books of Gradual (containing the chants for the Mass throughout the year, for a choir or specialized ordained singer) and the Antiphonale (containing antiphons and other melodies for the Office,

intended for the choir or a specialized ordained singer) required considerably more musical notation, and were rarely printed in Northern Europe before 1500. The Graduale Sueticum (the often-called Graduale Arosiensis) printed in 1493, most likely for the diocese of Västerås, stands out as an anomaly in this respect, in an otherwise predominantly manuscript-based book genre. All the missals listed in Table 3.1 are in folio format. Breviaries are typically in smaller format, in quarto or octavo. As far as the mass is concerned, there were in addition to missals and graduals, also a separate sequentarium printed in Lübeck: the Sequentiae: Prosae et sequentiae (before 1491). The earliest printed Psalters are left out of the present study, since they served, in addition to strict liturgical use, also a separate market of private ownership, itself worthy of further study elsewhere.

After 1500 the production of Missal and Breviary for a diocese often followed adjacently in time. This was for example the case when Trondheim (Nidaros) had both missal and breviary produced by different printers in 1519 (Räff in Copenhagen, and Bienayse and Kerbriand in Paris, respectively). The liturgical printed works issued around the Baltic Sea before 1500, however, reveal a rather different pattern, with sudden bursts of printing activity relating to one type of book at the time within a specific region. Thus we will concentrate our study to the period up to 1500. The printing activity in the last quarter of the fifteenth century may in fact be interpreted as something of a competition or rivalry between dioceses, coupled with the maximizing efforts of the commercial trade of the printers contracted to produce the books. Before we enter into these investigations, the geographical delimitation at hand ought perhaps to be briefly addressed.

2 Two Geographical Centres

What, in actual fact, is to be included in the region of the Baltic Sea if geographical demarcation is to make cultural and ecclesiastical sense? The region is sometimes referred to as ‘the hanseatic region’ in relation to the late middle ages, but that would be misleading in our case, since such a definition would include also the North Sea region of Friesland and Holland (with no natural

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6 Many psalters have been owned privately, as may be seen in Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid (Malmö: Allhems, 1956–1978): “Psalter” (vol. XI, coll. 583–595).
nautical path except through the Danish strait of Helsingør) and cities as far south into Germany as Magdeburg and Erfurt. The latter cities belonged to the league, but had at this point few ecclesiastical connections with the Baltic. Moreover, many of the diocese cities were not joined with the league of the Hansa. For the purposes of our investigation we shall include printed matter for dioceses with borders directly adjacent to the Baltic Sea. That includes all of Denmark, the North-German coast from Bremen eastwards, the North-Polish coasts, Eastern Prussia, Warmia, present day Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the Finnish Gulf, and all of present-day Finland and Sweden.

Table 3.1 lists the printed works in question chronologically. One may observe that the Lübeck breviary of 1478 rather soon was followed by breviaries throughout the neighbouring region: Odense in 1482, Hamburg circa 1484, Bremen in 1486 and Schleswig 1489, after which point Hamburg and Bremen issued new breviaries, a ‘second round’ which seems hard to explain for liturgical or financial reasons. In the region surrounding the neck of Denmark five

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Printer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>ISCTS</th>
<th>GW</th>
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<td><em>Breviarium Warmiense</em></td>
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<td>Nürnberg</td>
<td>ib01187390</td>
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breviaries were thus printed within two decades, all but one by printing workshops in the region (the 1486 Bremen breviary stands out, as it was printed in Cologne). Significantly, I will argue, not two of these ambitious printing enterprises employed the same printer.

If we turn to missals printed in the same region, affairs seem to have taken their start with the missal for Schwerin circa 1480. Odense followed in 1483, Roskilde circa 1484, and Schleswig and Lübeck both in 1486. This is within a period of only about five years, again mostly employing different printers (the exception is Lübeck, employing Brandis in their own city, which had previously been used also by the diocese of Odense). Taken together, seven different printers were active in Denmark during this period, none of which had a local background in Denmark.7

Interestingly, no breviary is known to have been printed in the Northern Baltic region of present-day Sweden and Finland until the area around the neck of Denmark had gone ‘full circle’ and started printing second editions.

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The pattern, and the modus operandi of itinerant printers, almost resemble that of a biological dissemination, where a species is not pushed to new localities until all resources have been exhausted in the first locality.

The second geographical centre that may be noted from a closer study of Table 3.1 is the vicinities of Lake Mälaren in south-eastern Sweden (see fig. 3.2). In 1493 the diocese of Linköping printed a breviary. Again, we may see that it appears to have ‘provoked’ the neighbouring dioceses into producing printed breviaries: Strängnäs 1495, Uppsala 1496, and Skara (further away from the three Mälar dioceses) in 1498. The two former employed the local printer family of Fabri in Stockholm. The choice of printer, place of publication and format makes sense, since Stockholm was a hanseatic city torn in half between the two dioceses, and it was a relatively easy affair to produce a text-based quarto book (there is considerably less musical notation than in a missal). Stockholm was also, in contrast to Lübeck, ecclesiastically ‘neutral’. It was the bishops Kort Rogge of Strängnäs and Jacob Ulfsson of Uppsala who called Johannes Fabri (Latinization of ‘Schmitt’, ‘Smedh’) to Stockholm in 1495.

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In the northern Baltic region it was also Ulfsson who first had a Missale printed for his diocese in 1484. Strängnäs followed in 1487 and Turku (Åbo, furthest away from lake Mälaren) in 1488. Again, this ‘round’ employed domestic or itinerary printers in the region (Snell and Ghotan in Stockholm). And just like in the neck of Denmark region, a ‘second round’ was later started, when Ulfsson had his second Uppsala missal printed by Jakob Wolff von Pforzheim in Basel, lavishly with much gold and colorization (see below).

We may note that both in the neck of Denmark region and in the Lake Mälaren region, the first diocese to produce a missal is also the first to start a new round of missals. The Schwerin missal of circa 1480 was supplanted by a new one only 20 years after (1500), an amazingly brief span in this period of time, given the efforts and costs of producing a printed missal made to order to a specific diocese. Just in the same way, the Uppsala missal of 1484 was followed by a new one in 1513. As for breviaries, Lübeck led the way in 1478, and when the neighbouring dioceses had produced their equivalents, they had a brief span between the two Uppsala Missals have been the topic of an M.A. diss. by Kasper Ohlsson, The Expensive Production of Missale Upsalense novum (1513) and the Short Life Span of Missale Upsalense vetus (1484), M.A. diss. (Department of Musicology, Uppsala University, 2020).

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8 Nowakowska, ‘From Strassburg to Trent’, calls the surge in liturgical printing in Sweden ‘a domino-style cluster’, p. 11.
9 Isaac Collijn, Svensk boktryckerihistoria under 14- och 1500-talen (Stockholm: Gebers, 1947); Undorf, From Gutenberg to Luther, p. 48.
10 The brief span between the two Uppsala Missals have been the topic of an M.A. diss. by Kasper Ohlsson, The Expensive Production of Missale Upsalense novum (1513) and the Short Life Span of Missale Upsalense vetus (1484), M.A. diss. (Department of Musicology, Uppsala University, 2020).
new one issued in 1490, only twelve years after the printing of their earlier breviary. One ought of course not to be surprised that printers were eager to take on such new commissions soon after the previous liturgical print. But how to explain that the dioceses placed such new commissions based on an *usus* of text and melodies that had not been altered for more than a century?

The assumption that the two main geographical areas of competition in liturgical books are relevant seems to be corroborated further if we consider
the present holdings of fragments and copies of the printed works. Surely, as any book historian knows, the secondary provenance can be convoluted or even deceptive, but the present holdings may at least give valuable hints of dispersion. The liturgical printed matter linked to Swedish parishes shows that a number of printed items from neighbouring dioceses have been owned by Swedish parish churches, but significantly not a single print from the neck of Denmark region.11 This sense of locality and interchange between dioceses within one of the regions, but not between the two, invites us to try to understand the decisions and rationale behind the costly and labour-intensive production of these books.

3 Indications of Diocese Rivalry in Relation to Printed Books

In many of the diocese’s printed works, the bishop is either mentioned as commissioner of the book, or at least in one way or another referred to in the colophons, typically also representing their crests (or, like in the Breviarium Scarense of 1498 and the Missale Lundense of 1514, physically portrayed in the form of stylized art).

We know from several felicitously surviving sources that Swedish bishops were acutely aware of the costs and labour required for producing a diocese liturgy in print. Uppsala archbishop Jacob Ulfsson produced two diocese missals during his episcopate, which may seem strange, especially since they reveal no substantial differences in contents as regards calendar, feasts or in the musical contents.12 Since a new Missal was unlikely to have been needed due to lack of copies, nor was different in its scope or contents, it seems likely that the diocese in fact first and foremost wished to procure a more lavish book, something that seems to be supported by the surviving copies from what ended up as the final commission, with Wolff von Pforzheim in Basel 1513. The assumption of an ‘arms race’ of physical lavishness is supported by two other costly achievements of authority that Ulfsson undertook: the foundation of Uppsala University in 1477 (in competition with the proposed charter of Copenhagen), and the mural paintings of Albertus Pictor in many of the Uppsala diocese parish churches, where Ulfsson himself was in several cases painted into the murals alongside his crest. In Figure 3.5 (p. 399) we can see the gilding of one

11 Undorf, From Gutenberg to Luther, pp. 160–161.
12 The differences have been studied by Ohlsson, The Expensive Production of Missale Upsalense.
of the copies of the second, Pforzheim-printed Uppsala missal. All the more surprising is the fact that this second edition had been in the making since at least 1508, only 24 years after the first Missale Upsalensis. This is known due to the surviving draft for a contract with Pater Hasse in Lübeck, which outlines an exact commission of 550 copies on paper and 150 on vellum (some folia, such as those containing the woodcut canon image were supposed to be on vellum also in the paper copies). In this draft it is specified exactly which feasts should have which type of initial, and similar details.

The drafted contract with Hasse in Lübeck, later realized instead with Wolff von Pforzheim in Basel, mentions 700 copies, produced for a diocese that only had around 280 churches at the time. Was the more ambitious print meant to flood the market of diocese missals also for neighbouring dioceses around Lake Mälaren? At least we know that it was spread in the other dioceses, as Wolfgang Undorf has shown. We also know that the diocese of Västerås had printed and procured their 1493 gradual at a high cost, as far as we know without calling it ‘Arosiense’ (title page or colophon has not survived).

What evidence is there, then, that bishops and consistoria deliberately compared their printing enterprises to those of others? Again, we may find evidence only after 1500, but we have little reason to assume that the situation

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14 Undorf, *From Gutenberg to Luther*, pp. 161–162.
would have been widely different earlier. Hans Brask, bishop of Linköping, knew, when he wrote to one of his canons on his way to Paris in 1524, how much Uppsala had paid for their 1513 missal, and wished to know also what Lund had paid for their 1514 missal.\textsuperscript{15} Compared to the liturgically detailed draft contract between Uppsala diocese and Hasse in 1508, Brask seems even more concerned with the outer lavishness of the production of the breviary he now is planning:

If it is possible for you to find out in Paris if we may have 800 breviaries printed for our church and for the blessed hours of the office, such as those printed in Lund with florishes and figures framing all margins, and half of them more gilded and half of them gold. Ask about the books, when they may be bought and write back to us immediately. We presume you may procure this as good as you see fit yourself. And also ask about the cost of the missals that were printed in Paris for the Cathedral in Lund so that we may adapt our order according to how Uppsala had theirs printed in Basel.\textsuperscript{16}

The two outlined commissions quoted here, none of which came to be realized in the form planned, seems to demonstrate what may be termed, for lack of a better term, ‘diocesan rivalry’. The rivalry was one that could be heard in the singing from these books, but also (more importantly, it seems, to Ulfsson and Brask) a visually ascertainable episcopal authority in the gold, vellum and decorations mentioned. The aspirations for this outer extravagance may also explain why at this later stage, bishops turn to Paris and Basel, shunning the itinerant or Lübeck-based printers that had produced their ‘first round’ of breviaries and missals, as outlined in Table 3.1.

\textsuperscript{15} Handlingar rörande Skandinaviens historia, 13 (Stockholm: A. Wiborg, 1828) pp. 116–117. See also Undorf, From Gutenberg to Luther, pp. 273–274, and Ohlson, The Expensive Production of Missale Upsalense, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid: ‘... kan thet swa bare aat för eder at j till Pariiss tha vether ath vi aktom lata prenta vid vii c breffuer pro ecclesia nostra cum tali litera som Hore beate vore satte aat them i Lwnd cum floribus et figuris per omnes margines som the voro tenakulerede oc helfithena forgylt more eorum oc helfithena goltli, Försöpden eder cum libriaris om nesta köpet oc scharffuer oss til med förste bud. Vi förmoda vel ther gott kööp propter som i ther sielfflue vel finnen. It. hörens oc före huad stycket gelder da missalibus the som trycktes parisiiis pro ecclesia Lwndensi at vj motte laga vor Kööp ther epter Vpsaliensis lothe tryckia sina in Basilea ...’. 
4 Commercial Aspects on Diocesan Liturgical Printed Works

Graheli and Pettegree have discussed what seems to have constituted a crisis in printing in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, pointing out that once the difficulties in selling out editions quickly became obvious, it was Europe’s monarchs and bishops who kept the trade going.\textsuperscript{17} The problem is summed up thus:

The major problems all occurred in the area of sales: how to tell customers what was now available; how to get the books to them; how to judge the size of the market; how to arrange payment; which other artisan tradesmen needed to be involved in the process.\textsuperscript{18}

None of these problems, bar perhaps the last one, did occur in an order such as that exemplified by the second Uppsala Missal or Linköping Breviary mentioned above. The number of copies were there agreed and supposed to be paid for beforehand, all to be delivered in bulk upon completion. The diocese must moreover themselves have provided the manuscript originals and closely overseen the editing process.\textsuperscript{19} Thus it may be argued that the printing of liturgical books saved the situation for printers during the crisis that Graheli and Petegree have addressed. That a printer could still find himself in financial trouble and unable to print and deliver what has been pre-ordered is shown by the example of Michel Wenssler in Basel, who could commence printing a commissioned Breviarium only from loans from a third party.\textsuperscript{20}

After Wenssler had found himself increasingly indebted from 1487 onwards, he turned mostly to printing breviaries, missals, graduals and antiphonals for different dioceses.\textsuperscript{21} Sarah Werner has pointed to the fact that the sequential production of large tomes in large quantities always put the printer in a vulnerable situation: until the final pages had been printed a workshop did not have


\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} This is mentioned, for example, in the colophon of the Nidaros breviary of 1519, where a diocese priest at the University in Paris was allocated the task.


\textsuperscript{21} Burkart, ‘Early Book Printing’, p. 52.
one single book to sell. Since the earlier printed pages could consequently not be used to subsidize the latter, it was, as Werner puts it, ‘all or nothing’ with such commissions.22

As we can see in Table 3.1, a number of the printed works were produced on-site or in the vicinity of the diocese city. Some printers, like Ghotan, printed in no fewer than five cities in the Scando-Baltic region. The patronage that an itinerary printer temporarily enjoyed under a bishop or consistory amounted to the opposite of competition on the free market. Surviving privilege documents such as those for Dold, Reicher and Mentzer to print the Breviary of Würzburg (Breviarium Herbipolense) in 1479 reveal a patronage situation similar to that of any tradesman brought to a medieval city:

To them alone and to no one else have we given the opportunity to print accurately and in the best possible way these liturgical books … We have taken them and their families, their goods and chattels, under our dutiful and paternal protection and defence.23

Stephan Arndes was responsible for a number of the first liturgical printed books for the Baltic region and his career illustrates the close relationship between mobile proto-capitalist endeavour and ecclesiastical authority. Arndes moved from Italian lands to Schleswig in 1485, probably on request from Helrich von der Wisch, bishop of Schleswig.24 There he printed the Schleswig missal in 1486. After moving to Lübeck, he printed the Breviary for Schleswig in 1489, but noticeably failing to secure the printing commissions for the diocese of Lübeck itself; this privilege went instead to Stuch in Nürnberg and Drach in Speyer, very far from the city. Instead Arndes printed the Missal for Viborg, further north into Danish land, and the Gradual for the diocese of Västerås, maintaining the city of Lübeck as his base. Arndes is in many respects an example of the opposite of an itinerary printer, as he held the largest printing workshop in Northern Europe, but received commissions from

23 Quoted in Lionel Bently et al. (eds.), *Primary Sources on Copyright (1455–1900)* (Cambridge: Open Books, 2010), and discussed in context in Duggan, ‘Reading Liturgical Books’, pp. 22–23.
24 Duggan, ‘Reading Liturgical Books’, p. 31. See also Undorf, *From Gutenberg to Luther*, pp. 19 and 27–32.
afar, including from south-western Europe. He also seems to have printed the Schleswig missal of 1486 without direct commission from the bishop.

The crests of bishops had an important function in authorization and emblematic representation in book printing. When empty arms (without crests) are found in incunabula they could either merely represent a technical inability to produce the local crests with types, but could they also signal an openness to use in more than one diocese, or (within a diocese) for more than one consecutive bishop? Brandis produced printed liturgical books for the dioceses of both Lübeck and Odense. The final page of his 1483 Missale Othoniense comprises three coats of arms side by side (see Figure 3.4): one for the city of Lübeck (double eagle), one for the bishop (crosier outside empty split escutcheon) and one which may have been intended for Brandis' own crest. Karl Rønnow, bishop of Odense at the time, could have his crest entered by hand, but so could just as easily another bishop, such as his successor in Odense. Had he wished to, Brandis could surely have used woodcut crests as he did in other books (he was famous for his woodcut illustrations in his Josephus edition of 1475).

The diocese of Odense here stood alongside the city of Lübeck, itself a diocese city with Albert Krummendiek as bishop and for which Brandis produced both a Breviary and Missal. The colophon poetry in the Odense Missal includes the line: ‘Me facit armari lubicana sed vrbsque parari / Ottoniense mode presulo sub karolo’ (‘I [the Missal] was made under the arms of Lübeck, but the city of Odense prepared me under bishop Karl’). Such intimations certainly need to be addressed in the analysis of mutual dependency of printers, city council and bishops.

Previously it has been noted that printers often co-produced books by re-using contents that could be identical, thereby maximizing production, but Brandis’ dealings with Odense and Lübeck shows a balance of patronage within one single printed version, both in heraldry and in verse.

28 See Undorf, From Gutenberg to Luther, pp. 60–61 for such a case with Ghotan’s books printed for Turku and Uppsala.
By the commissions from dioceses, printers moved to Baltic cities which would otherwise not have had a local printer, and the typical pattern was that a number of smaller and cheaper, commercially viable printed works were produced concurrently with the missals and breviaries.29 This was not something which is likely to have concerned the bishops to any greater degree, but it is a fact that book history has focused more on these ‘free speculation’ market items rather than those commissions of liturgical books which in effect introduced printing in what is presently North-Western Germany, Denmark and Sweden.

5 Conclusions

It appears that the printing of breviaries and missals in the Scando-Baltic region before 1500 was a mutual game of patronage and investment by bishops and locally based or itinerary printers. This sets these printing commissions, with numbers of copies that often by far exceeded the number of churches and priests in the dioceses, in the light of different *usus*, local deviances in liturgical singing which had to be upheld against those of other dioceses, just at the very end of the crumbling Kalmar union, and the nascent Royal Kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden. While the printing press has often historiographically been depicted as a revolutionary force in Church history (in the hands of reformers in German-speaking lands), this study shows that the new technology could conversely be a powerful tool in upholding existing ecclesiastical and liturgical authority.30

The printers were most likely as disinterested and pragmatic in these ecclesiastical power struggles as were their fellow tradesmen who later helped pave the way for the reformation movements of Luther and other city reformers. They were predominantly tradesmen and businessmen. From the preserved drafted contracts and inquiries between the two parties, it seems that the bishops and dioceses were the perfect counterparts for the printers, namely wealthy and powerful authorities well-nigh interested in paying more rather than less for a notable and locally discernibly liturgical print. The destruction rate of these books has been devastating in the light of the original size of editions.

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30 See Nowakowska, ‘From Strassburg to Trent’, pp. 8, 10.
None of the aspiring bishops and consistoria around 1500 could of course fathom that in less than thirty years, the landscape of liturgical music printing was about to change forever. In fact, the rapid turnover of technology and new demands on the printed product just before the nascent North-European reformations is comparable to the rapidity of changes in music technology in the twentieth century.